



American Association of
State Highway and
Transportation Officials

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

David L. Winstead, President
Secretary
Maryland Department
of Transportation

Francis B. Francois
Executive Director

January 26, 1998

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street
Washington D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Enclosed are an original and nine copies of AASHTO's reply comments to the Second Notice of Proposed Rulemaking WT Docket 96-86 concerning The Development of Operational, Technical and Spectrum Requirements for Meeting Federal, State and Local Public Safety Agency Communications Requirements Through the Year 2010.

Do not hesitate to inform me should you have comments or questions regarding this submittal.

Very truly yours,

for Larry A. Miller
for Chester G. Jones
Chairman, Special Committee on
Communications

Enclosure

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JAN 26 1998

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington DC 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
The Development of Operational,) WT Docket No. 96-86
Technical, and Spectrum)
Requirements for Meeting)
Federal, State and Local Public)
Safety Agency Communication)
Requirements Through the)
Year 2010)

Establishment of Rules and Requirements
For Priority Access Service

To: The Commission

SECOND NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) respectfully submits these reply comments to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the above captioned proceeding.

AASHTO is the national association of the state departments of highways and transportation in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Its scope includes all five principal transportation modes, and its major purpose is to foster development, operation and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system.

AASHTO's Board of Directors is made up of the Chief Administrative Officers of the member departments. These officials have the authority to make all official decisions regarding the operation of their respective organizations. While other commenters in this proceeding may boast of a larger numerical membership, the majority of those members are not charged with an official policy-making authority for their departments.

AASHTO, through its Special Committee on Communications, has been involved in matters related to radio frequency communications and associated systems for more than 40 years. AASHTO serves as the Commission's certified frequency coordinator for the Highway Maintenance Radio Service and shares frequency coordination duties with other public safety frequency coordinators for the Local Government Radio Service frequencies. AASHTO is an active member of the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITSA) with membership on many ITSA committees, including the ITSA Telecommunications Committee.

AASHTO participated in the activities of the Public Safety Wireless Advisory Committee (PSWAC) and is a member of the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) and generally agrees with the positions of both organizations.

AASHTO has also consulted with other Public Safety Associations and is responding to this Notice as one of the Joint Commenters.

POSITION STATEMENT

AASHTO strongly supports a national plan with state/local agency input for the assignment and management of the spectrum in the 746-806 MHz band. The plan administered at the state level and overseen by the National Public Safety Telecommunications Council (NPSTC) would allow for the greatest utilization of spectrum across the broadest range of public safety and public service users in accordance with FCC rules. We believe that state committees and not regional committees should be allowed to define internal usage under a national plan. In areas of a state where demand for spectrum is the greatest, the committees may limit usage to public safety entities. We believe the national plan should address warehousing of frequencies and provide support to the state committees to monitor construction of systems. Licensees obtaining authorizations for operation of systems utilizing spectrum in the 746-806 MHz band must relinquish the licenses for their existing frequencies in the spectrum band between 150 and 512 MHz.

While 24 MHz of spectrum may be required in urban areas, funding is not readily available for small to medium sized public

safety agencies in rural areas. Consideration should be given to allowing these agencies to share public safety spectrum with other public service organizations in order to reduce costs. This would provide realistic affordable options for these organizations. Sharing should be restricted to users who will use the communications systems for internal use and not for resale of communications service.

Frequency Coordination

APCO, in its comments states that it should be designated as the sole coordinator for the 746-806 MHz band, and that it is the only coordinator that represents all public safety services. This is the same position advanced by APCO in its comments to PR Docket 83-737.

The Commission correctly rejected APCO's request noting that AASHTO was truly representative of the Highway and Transportation Agencies and that other organizations were more representative of their respective constituents than APCO. AASHTO continues to disagree with APCO's contention and feels that no single coordinator can effectively represent the diverse groups of Public Safety organizations.

APCO was certified as the Police and Local Government Radio Services frequency coordinator in 1986. The Commission, however, has now determined that competition between frequency coordinators will provide for more efficient allocation of the increased capacity created by the introduction of more efficient technology in the frequency bands between 150 and 512 MHz. A part of that decision allowed all current public safety frequency coordinators to coordinate applications for local government radio service eligibles. This rule necessitated the exchange of application data between all coordinators on a daily basis.

AASHTO, through its data base contractor has accomplished this task. This near "real time" data transfer eliminates the need for a "single data base " as proposed by APCO. Such a data transfer methodology would also be easily accomplished for the 746-806 MHz spectrum band.

If in fact the 746-806 MHz spectrum is allocated through a state or national planning process, then all public safety frequency coordinators would be equally qualified to furnish frequency coordination services.

APCO, in a letter directed to AASHTO, states that "the NPSPAC Regional Planning Committees are independently structured with the authority to approve or deny the assignment of NPSPAC

channels in their respective regions" and that "There is no official involvement in the Regional Planning process unless the FCC requests intervention by APCO." AASHTO does not feel that any system consisting of 55 or so locally controlled committees could effectively and impartially manage a spectrum allocation of the magnitude of that which is under consideration in this proceeding. A national plan with oversight and authority is vital to prevent the problems which have plagued some regions.

APCO's comments (page 8) state that it is the only coordinator with a network of local frequency advisors in each of the public safety regions. AASHTO has for more than 40 years had a system of frequency coordinators in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED RESOURCE SYSTEMS

The Nevada Department of Transportation is currently constructing a "shared resource" statewide telecommunications system utilizing 800 MHz National Public Safety Planning Advisory Committee (NPSPAC) frequencies. The system includes federal and state governmental agencies as well as utility and public service companies and requires a waiver of certain FCC rules. The participants are:

The City of North Las Vegas

Sierra Pacific Power Company

Nevada Power Company

The University and Community College System of Nevada

The Nevada National Guard

The State of Nevada Capital Police Department

The United States Department of Energy

The Nevada Department of Information Services

The Nevada Department of Transportation has experienced many delays in its efforts to expand the system and involve additional partners (sharing costs results in lower expenses to all participants) and has been forced to request assistance from the FCC in order to have applications processed by APCO. If there were multiple coordinators to choose from, many of these problems would not exist.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The Commission should not endorse any technical standard for which the intellectual property rights are owned and controlled by any one manufacturer. To do so could limit competition resulting in increased costs for equipment to Public Safety organizations.

CHANNELIZATION

AASHTO recommends a channelization plan for the 746-806 MHz spectrum allocation based on 12.5 kHz channel bandwidth. End users should be allowed to configure systems by aggregating channels for uses which require greater bandwidth or to use two or more narrow band channels within a 12.5 kHz channel as long as the Commission's spectral efficiency standards are met (one voice path per 6.25kHz, 4.8kbs per 6.25kHz).

INTEROPERABILITY

AASHTO recommends 12.5 kHz analog frequency modulation as the interoperability baseline for all systems utilizing the 746-806 MHz spectrum.

CONCLUSION

The Rules governing the licensing and operation by systems utilizing the spectrum, which is the topic of this proceeding, must be flexible and allow the sharing of resources in a manner which is consistent with a National/State Plan.


A National Oversight mechanism is needed to provide assistance to applicants who feel that they are not adequately

represented by the State Committees. The National Public Safety Telecommunications Council is the most appropriate organization to assume that responsibility.

AASHTO respectfully requests that the Commission consider and act favorably on these comments as it proceeds with this important undertaking.

Respectfully submitted,
American Association of State Highway
and Transportation Officials, Special
Committee on Communications

By:



for Chester G. Jones, Chairman
Special Committee on Communications